Overview

Nonpoint source pollution is the leading cause of water quality impairment in California. The primary nonpoint sources in the Central Valley include runoff and percolation from land use activities related to agriculture, timber harvests, abandoned mines, recreation, and urban and rural development. The goal of the Central Valley Nonpoint Source Program (NPS Program) is to restore waters impacted by NPS pollution and protect unimpaired water bodies by assessing NPS pollution problems and causes and implementing management programs.

The Central Valley NPS Program implements the statewide *California Nonpoint Program Implementation Plan for 2014-2020* (Six-Year Implementation Plan), which was approved by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) in August 2015. The purpose of this plan is to improve the State's ability to effectively manage NPS pollution and conform to the requirements of the federal Clean Water Act and the federal Coastal Zone Act Reauthorization Amendments of 1990. The Six-Year Implementation Plan focuses on impaired water bodies and water bodies that face immediate water quality threats from new and expanding development.

The Central Valley NPS Program encompasses several different programs and more than 70 staff who are working together to address NPS pollution. State funding supports the majority of NPS Program staff time. The USEPA provides a limited amount of funding from the Clean Water Act Section 319(h) grant program ("319(h) funding") to implement USEPA-approved Six-Year Implementation Plan activities, with focus on impaired water bodies. Section 319(h) funding supported 3.37 personnel years (PYs) at the Central Valley Water Board in FY 2015-16, which equated to about 5% of all staff time for Central Valley NPS Program efforts.

Six-Year Implementation Plan Initiatives

The Six-Year Implementation Plan identifies the following six "initiatives" where the Central Valley NPS Program and its associated programs will focus their efforts; associated programs are noted in parentheses.

1. Protect Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Beneficial Uses (Delta Program and TMDL Program)
2. Central Valley Salinity Alternatives for Long-Term Sustainability (CV-SALTS Program)
3. Dairies (Confined Animal Facility Program)
4. Irrigated Lands (Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program)
5. Timber Harvest Activities and Waiver of WDRs (Forest Activities Program)
6. Protect Threatened and High Quality Waters (multiple programs)

Initiatives 1 through 5 are associated with individual programs for the Water Board and are described in separate program-specific fact sheets. Initiative #6 is addressed by activities associated with initiatives 1 through 5 as well as other Water Board programs that address nonpoint pollution sources, such as the Water Quality Certification Program and Mining Program.

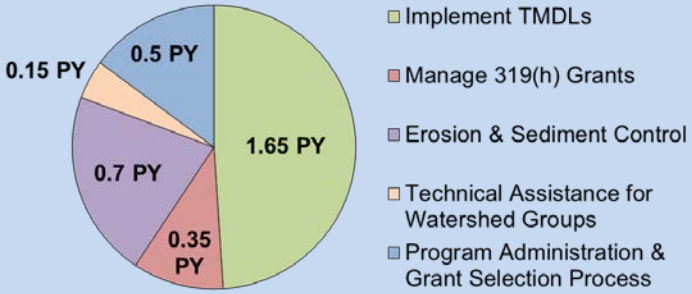
Six-Year Implementation Plan Goals

The Six-Year Implementation Plan identifies goals, objectives, actions, and performance measures for each of the initiatives. The Six-Year Implementation Plan also identifies a set of "targeted waterbody-pollutant combinations" with water quality improvement goals designed to demonstrate the success of NPS Program activities. The water quality improvement goals are specified for the end of the current planning horizon in 2020 and twenty years later in 2040. Targeted waterbody-pollutant combinations in the Central Valley include pesticides in the Delta and its tributaries, phosphorus and mercury in Clear Lake, selenium in Mud Slough (a tributary to the San Joaquin River), among others. These initiatives and waterbody-pollutant combinations do not preclude work on other sources of NPS pollution. That work will continue; however, efforts will be concentrated on the initiatives and associated targeted waterbodies.

Federal Clean Water Act Section 319(h) Grant Program

Section 319(h) Grant Program funding is used in the Central Valley to support Water Board staff time to conduct NPS control activities identified in the Six-Year Implementation Plan that are consistent with federal nonpoint source priorities. These include implementation of TMDLs and management of grant projects supported by Section 319(h) funding. The grant projects are conducted by a variety of federal and state agencies, resource conservation districts, and other groups to implement full scale, on-the-ground management measures to address water quality problems resulting from NPS pollution. Section 319(h) funding supported 3.37 PY for Central Valley Water Board staff time to conduct NPS pollution control activities and manage grants in FY 2015-16. The Section 319(h) Grant Program requires a USEPA-approved annual work plan specific to the activities it funds.

Accomplishments of 319(h)-Funded Activities in FY 2015-16



- Supported Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program efforts to complete the Grasslands Bypass Project WDRs, and worked with dischargers to implement the WDRs. These WDRs implement the San Joaquin River, Mud Slough and Grasslands Bypass Selenium TMDLs.
- Supported stakeholder efforts to implement the Clear Lake Nutrient TMDL.
- Addressed high priority NPS erosion, sediment and metals discharges associated with powerline corridors and shooting ranges.
- Supported Forest Activities Program efforts to develop the Battle Creek Watershed Management Plan to address accelerated erosion from the recent Ponderosa Fire and chronic sources of sediment outside of the Ponderosa Fire burn perimeter.
- Managed four NPS 319(h) grants and executed a fifth grant for grantees to:
  - Implement best management practices (BMPs) to reduce sediment and phosphorus loading to Clear Lake from U.S. Forest Service roads in the Middle Creek watershed, and gully erosion in the upper Willow Creek watershed;
  - Implement BMPs to reduce farmers' use of pesticides in the San Joaquin River watershed;
  - Test potential management practices to reduce methylmercury production in seasonal wetlands in the Cosumnes River Preserve.
- Participated in Integrated Regional Water Management and watershed group meetings and provided technical/permitting support for monitoring and restoration projects for impaired waters.